United Nations A/68/514

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 October 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 99 (w)
General and complete disarmament: taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

Proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. The Open-ended Working Group was established pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 of General Assembly resolution 67/56.

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Report of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 67/56, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", the General Assembly expressed its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. By paragraphs 1 and 2 of the resolution, the Assembly decided to establish an open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons and that the working group should convene in Geneva in 2013 for up to 15 working days, within available timeframes, with the contribution of international organizations and civil society, in accordance with established practice.

2. By paragraph 3 of that same resolution, the General Assembly further decided that the working Group should submit a report on its work, reflecting discussions held and all proposals made, to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, which will assess its work, taking into account developments in other relevant forums.

II. Organizational matters

A. Opening and duration of the sessions

3. Pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 67/56, the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons held an organizational meeting on 14 March and substantive meetings from 14 to 24 May, on 27 June and from 19 to 30 August 2013.

4. The Geneva branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs provided the Secretary and substantive support to the Working Group.

5. The organizational meeting was opened by the Director of the Geneva branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, who oversaw the election of the Chair of the Working Group.

B. Officers

6. At its organizational session, on 14 March, the Working Group elected by acclamation Manuel B. Dengo (Costa Rica) as its Chair. The Chair was assisted by friends of the Chair from Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Finland, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland.

C. Adoption of the agenda and participation

7. At its organizational meeting, on 14 March, the Working Group adopted its agenda (A/AC.281/1), which read as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of the Chair.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Organization of work.
5. Development of proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.
6. Report to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.
7. Any other business.

8. At the same meeting, the Working Group decided on the modalities for the broad participation of representatives of international organizations and civil society in its work.

D. Documentation

9. The Working Group had before it the following:

(a) Agenda (A/AC.281/1);

(b) Working paper submitted by Austria on perceptions and views on nuclear disarmament: addressing differences and bridging gaps (A/AC.281/WP.1);

(c) Working paper submitted by Cuba on a proposal for practical actions to achieve nuclear disarmament (A/AC.281/WP.2);

(d) Working paper submitted by the Chair on a list of ideas, elements and proposals raised during the May meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/AC.281/WP.3);

(e) Working paper submitted by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden on building Blocks for a world without nuclear weapons (A/AC.281/WP.4);

(f) Working paper submitted by Austria on an exploration of some contributions that also non-nuclear-weapon States could engage in to take multilateral nuclear disarmament forward (A/AC.281/WP.5);

(g) Working paper submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/AC.281/WP.6);

(h) Working paper submitted by Costa Rica and Malaysia on a model nuclear weapons convention (A/AC.281/WP.7);

(i) Working paper submitted by Ireland and Switzerland on identifying the essential elements for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons (A/AC.281/WP.8);

(j) Working paper submitted by Mexico on organizing ideas to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/AC.281/WP.9);

(k) Working paper submitted by the New Agenda Coalition on elements for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons (A/AC.281/WP.10);

(l) Working paper submitted by Pakistan on matters concerning the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/AC.281/WP.11);

(m) Timetable for the meetings in May 2013 (A/AC.281/INF/1);

(n) Summary by the moderator of discussions in panel I, entitled "Existing multilateral treaty-based obligations and commitments", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/2);

(o) Summary by the moderator of discussions in panel II, entitled "Towards a world free of nuclear weapons", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/3);

(p) Summary by the moderator of discussions in panel VII, entitled "Roles and responsibilities for nuclear disarmament", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/4);

(q) Summary by the moderator of discussions in panel V, entitled "A conversation on international law relevant to the use of nuclear weapons", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/5);

(r) Summary by the moderator of panel VI, entitled "Exploring new approaches to nuclear disarmament", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/6);

(s) Summary by the moderator of panel IV, entitled "Perspectives on the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a nuclear weapons free world", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/7);

(t) Summary by the moderator of panel VII, entitled "Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/8);

(u) Summary by the moderator of panel VIII, entitled "Role of parliamentarians in advancing nuclear disarmament", submitted by the Chair (A/AC.281/INF/9);

(v) Contribution from non-governmental organizations on achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world (A/AC.281/NGO/1);

(w) Contribution from non-governmental organizations on bridging the gaps, building the framework, ensuring success (A/AC.281/NGO/2);

(x) Contribution from non-governmental organizations on key recommendations on promoting education (A/AC.281/NGO/3).

III. Proceedings of the Working Group

A. General

10. In accordance with the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 67/56 and the agenda for the session, the Working Group addressed, in an open, constructive and transparent manner, various issues related to nuclear disarmament, including the status and role of nuclear weapons in the current security context, the elements and approaches to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, possible ways to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

11. During the meetings of the Working Group, participants expressed their points of view on a range of issues, including the current status of and future prospects for nuclear disarmament and multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, existing commitments and initiatives, elements to consider in and possible approaches to multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and the roles and responsibilities of all actors, among other issues to be addressed for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

12. As mandated by the General Assembly, the Working Group conducted its work in a deliberative and inclusive manner and, without prejudice to the eventual outcome and national positions, allowed for frank and constructive discussion on ways to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

B. Taking stock of existing unilateral, bilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament commitments and proposals, and aspects, perspectives and challenges that pertain to nuclear disarmament and multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations

13. In order to take stock of existing unilateral, bilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament commitments and proposals, and of aspects, perspectives and challenges that pertain to nuclear disarmament and multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, the Working Group held the following informal thematic discussions:

(a) The discussion on the theme "Multilateral treaty-based obligations and commitments" was moderated by Peter Woolcott (Australia). Statements were made by the following panellists: Theresa Hitchens, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR); Beatrice Fihn, Reaching Critical Will; and Ward Wilson, James Martin Centre for Non-Proliferation Studies;

(b) The discussion on the theme "Towards a world free of nuclear weapons" was moderated by Paul Wilson (Australia). Statements were made by the following panellists: Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, James Martin Centre for Non-Proliferation Studies; and Gioconda Ubeda, Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(c) The discussion on the theme "Other initiatives and proposals" was moderated by Elissa Golberg (Canada). Statements were made by the following panellists: Jarmo Sareva, Office for Disarmament Affairs; and Thomas Nash, Article 36;

(d) The discussion on the theme "Lessons learned: transparency, confidence-building and verification" was moderated by Mark Versteden (Netherlands). Statements were made by the following panellists: Anders Persbo, Verification Research, Training and Information Centre; Pavel Podvig, UNIDIR; and Jean Pascal Zanders, European Union Institute for Security Studies;

(e) The discussion on the theme "Perspectives on the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world" was moderated by Anthony Andanje (Kenya). A statement was made by the panellist Rebecca Johnson, Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy;

(f) The discussion on the theme "A conversation on international law relevant to the use of nuclear weapons" was moderated by Dell Higgie (New Zealand). Statements were made by the following panellists: Andrew Clapham, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights; and Louise Doswald-Beck;

(g) The discussion on the theme "Approaching nuclear disarmament from different angles" was moderated by Urs Schmid (Switzerland). Statements were made by the following panellists: Patricia Lewis, Chatham House; John Borrie, UNIDIR; and Neil Buhne, United Nations Development Programme;

(h) The discussion on the theme "Roles and responsibilities for nuclear disarmament" was moderated by Antonio Jose Vallim Guerreiro (Brazil). A statement was made by the panellist Tarik Rauf;

(i) The discussion on the theme "The role of parliamentarians in advancing nuclear disarmament" was moderated by Ulises Canchola Gutierrez (Mexico). Statements were made by the following panellists: Martin Chungong, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); Saber Chowdhury, IPU; Sue Miller, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament; and Alyn Ware, Basel Peace Office;

(j) The discussion on the theme "Nuclear disarmament education" was moderated by Jyri Jarviaho (Finland). Statements were made by the following panellists: William Potter, Monterey Institute of International Studies; Kerstin Vignard, UNIDIR; Hiro Yamamoto (Japan); and Christian Ciobanu, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and Ban All Nukes generation.

C. General exchange of views

14. At its meetings on 14 and 15 May, the Working Group held a general exchange of views. Statements were made by the representatives of Algeria, Austria, Belarus, Brazil (on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition[1]), Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey Statements were also made by Mayors for Peace and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (on behalf of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons).

15. At the meeting on 27 June, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs made a statement.

[1] The New Agenda Coalition is composed of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.

D. Developing proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

16. At the meetings on 27 June and 19 and 20 August, working papers containing proposals were introduced by Austria, Cuba, Egypt (on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition), Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan (on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden), Malaysia (on behalf of Costa Rica and Malaysia), Mexico and, jointly, by Ireland and Switzerland. A list of ideas, elements and proposals raised during the meetings of the Working Group was also compiled and introduced by the Chair. Papers containing proposals were also submitted by Reaching Critical Will, the Basel Peace Office, Mayors for Peace, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and the United Nations Youth Association of Romania.

17. In addressing the proposals submitted for consideration in accordance with its mandate, the Working Group focused on the following topics:

(a) Approaches on how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons (moderated by the Chair);

(b) Elements to be considered in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons (moderated by Mohamed Hatem El-Atawy (Egypt));

(c) Reviewing the role of nuclear weapons in the security context of the twenty-first century in order to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons (moderated by Kelly Anderson (Canada));

(d) The role of international law in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons (moderated by Roland Sturm (Austria));

(e) The role of States and other actors in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons (moderated by Laurent Masmejean (Switzerland));

(f) Other practical actions that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons (moderated by Alexander Ben-Acquaah (Ghana)).

IV. Discussions and proposals

18. During the meetings of the Working Group, participants engaged in interactive, open and constructive discussions on substantive aspects of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. They recognized the absence of concrete outcomes of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations within the United Nations framework for more than a decade and emphasized the importance and urgency of making substantive progress on priority disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Throughout the discussions, as well as in working papers presented to the Working Group, State representatives, international organizations and civil society presented a breadth of views and proposals. They are reflected in the following paragraphs without prejudice to national positions, or priority, or attempting to be comprehensive or exhaustive. The details of the discussions held and proposals made during the meetings of the Working Group can be found in the statements, working papers and other conference documents.

A. Approaches on how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

19. In addressing ways to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, the Working Group discussed the current status, perspectives and challenges to nuclear disarmament.

20. Participants affirmed that the universal objective of taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations remained the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Several approaches towards this goal were discussed, including an action plan for a nuclear-weapons free and non-violent world to attain the goal of nuclear disarmament in a universal, time bound, non-discriminatory phased and verifiable manner; the step-by-step approach of mutually reinforcing and progressive steps leading to the full and complete elimination of nuclear weapons; the comprehensive approach for a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapons convention, to prohibit the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of such weapons, and to provide for their destruction; a legally binding framework committing all States to a world without nuclear weapons comprising mutually reinforcing components, implemented in an unconditional manner and backed by clearly defined timelines and benchmarks; and the adoption of a "building blocks" approach for the development of a set of mutually reinforcing unilateral, bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral elements not implying conditionality and without prejudice to a timeframe.

21. The Working Group emphasized, however, that regardless of the approach that the international community would decide to follow, in order to move forward on nuclear disarmament and, ultimately, eliminate the risk of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from the use of nuclear weapons, the international community should focus on common grounds, not on differences.

B. Elements to be considered in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

22. The Working Group discussed the relationship between the elements needed to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. While recognizing the interrelationship between the method and the elements, delegations suggested that there were elements that needed to be addressed regardless of the method employed. It was also proposed that the method would determine the elements.

23. The multilateral nature of negotiations for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons was discussed, as were unilateral, bilateral and plurilateral initiatives.

24. Discussion was also conducted on how to group the elements needed for the establishment and the elements needed for the maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Several alternatives were explored in grouping elements that varied in terms of the stage of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons (end-state or interim measures), the timeframe of their development (short-, medium- or long-term elements) and their nature (political confidence-building measures or legally binding instruments).

25. The Working Group discussed the need for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of existing disarmament and non-proliferation obligations and commitments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the outcomes of the review conferences of the parties to the Treaty. In this context, the Group also discussed the realization of the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, which is what all States parties to the Treaty are committed to under article VI of that Treaty.

26. The Working Group discussed the mutually reinforcing nature of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in all its aspects. The Group also discussed the affirmation of vertical and horizontal non-proliferation commitments.

27. During discussions and statements, and in working papers, participants considered the importance of pursuing elements to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, in totality and without preconditions or hierarchy. While stressing the need to apply the principles of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility to the goal of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons, the following elements, which include political measures and legal instruments that could be established and implemented, were put forward:

(a) Affirming the unequivocal commitment to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the need for an agreed framework to this end;

(b) Maintaining or declaring a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, and converting installations for peaceful purposes and under international verification;

(c) Maintaining or declaring a moratorium on nuclear weapons tests, the development of new types of nuclear weapons and the upgrading of current nuclear-weapon systems;

(d) Reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the military and security doctrines, postures and strategies of nations and alliances, with a view towards their complete elimination;

(e) Maintaining or declaring no-first-use of nuclear weapons;

(f) Removing nuclear weapons from territories of non-nuclear-weapon States;

(g) Designating fissile material no longer required for military purposes and the development of legally binding verification and arrangements, within the

context of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to ensure the irreversible removal of such fissile material;

(h) Enhancing the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones by removing the conditionalities and reservations that have been imposed by nuclear-weapon States and broadening their reach by establishing new zones where they do not already exist, particularly in the Middle East, as well as national legislation prohibiting nuclear weapons;

(i) Increasing transparency and providing a clear baseline against which to measure progress in nuclear disarmament, including a complete inventory of nuclear stockpiles, nuclear warheads, delivery systems and fissile material for nuclear weapons. In this context, participants discussed the importance of submitting regular reports, using a uniform format;

(j) Enhancing measures towards the security of nuclear weapons and to reduce the operational readiness of nuclear-weapons systems, including through the development of legal instruments and other measures, to minimize the possibility of nuclear detonations, whether intentional, accidental or as a result of miscalculation;

(k) Implementing measures to reduce nuclear danger;

(l) Developing verification tools, capabilities and mechanisms to be utilized towards the establishment and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons;

(m) Universalizing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

28. The Working Group also discussed measures consisting of legally binding instruments towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons, to be implemented in an interim phase. These variably included:

(a) A clear, legally binding universal and non-discriminatory multilateral commitment, on the part of all States, to the goal of nuclear disarmament, with clearly defined benchmarks and timelines;

(b) Progressive, uninterrupted and irreversible reduction in nuclear arsenals, anywhere and of any type, with clear benchmarks and timelines accompanied by an international verification regime and the placement of all nuclear facilities under such a regime;

(c) A multilateral, legally binding instrument dealing with all aspects of testing of nuclear weapons and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;

(d) A multilateral, legally binding instrument dealing with fissile material that includes the following options:

(i) A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

(ii) A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and dealing with existing stocks of such material and the dismantlement or convertion, for peaceful uses, of facilities and related equipment for the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

(e) The provision of legally binding negative security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon States;

(f) Bilateral or plurilateral legal arrangements between nuclear-weapon States;

(g) A legally binding instrument on the no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

29. The Working Group identified the following elements as necessary for maintaining a world without nuclear weapons once that has been achieved:

(a) Complete elimination of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons material and its verification;

(b) Prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;

(c) Prohibition of the possession, stockpiling, development or transfer of nuclear weapons;

(d) Prohibition of the production or use of already existing fissile material for nuclear weapons and placing all such fissile material under international safeguards;

(e) Prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests in all their forms, including both supercritical and subcritical tests.

C. Reviewing the role of nuclear weapons in the security context of the twenty-first century in order to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

30. The Working Group discussed the importance of examining the role of nuclear weapons in the security context of the twenty-first century.

31. In addressing the role of nuclear weapons, participants considered broader and more multidimensional definitions of collective security that take into account, inter alia, humanitarian issues and developmental goals. The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons was put forward as a cross-cutting issue that affects all elements of the disarmament agenda. Participants also spoke about the need to examine the nature of security in the twenty-first century and questioned whether nuclear weapons met those needs. Devaluing nuclear weapons and questioning the effect of deterrence postures were discussed.

32. Participants discussed the need to take into account the security perceptions of States possessing nuclear weapons, engage in dialogue and build trust and confidence among those States. Proposals were made with regard to reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in the existing security doctrine. The need for engagement between non-nuclear-weapon States and States possessing nuclear weapons was also raised.

33. Proposals covered a range of activities from unilateral reductions in tactical, strategic and non-deployed nuclear warheads to the full elimination of such weapons through a multilateral negotiated process. Participants also made proposals on preventing the modernization of existing nuclear arsenals and the development of new weapons.

D. The role of international law in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

34. The Working Group considered the contribution of international law to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons and gaps in the existing international legal framework.

35. The Working Group discussed options to fill the legal gaps in achieving the objective of a world without nuclear weapons, including in the current international legal framework, through a multilateral legal instrument, or several instruments, that would complement existing ones. Participants discussed whether such an instrument or instruments should be universal and prohibit the development (including the modernization) of nuclear weapons, the testing in all its forms of nuclear weapons, the production of nuclear weapons, the production or use of existing fissile material for nuclear weapons, the possession and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, the transfer of nuclear weapons and the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this context, the option of a treaty banning nuclear weapons was discussed.

36. Taking into account past efforts of unilateral and bilateral nuclear arms control and disarmament measures, delegations discussed a number of concrete multilateral nuclear disarmament measures to be undertaken through legally binding instruments and within a defined timeframe. They also discussed the verification regime for nuclear disarmament established through legally binding instruments.

37. In order to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for achieving and, in particular, maintaining a world without nuclear weapons, delegations discussed the extension of the application of the safeguards regime to all States.

38. The Working Group considered the supportive nature of other legal norms, both existing and proposed ones, for global nuclear disarmament efforts. In addition, it addressed the legality and legitimacy of nuclear weapons. In this context, the stigmatization of nuclear weapons and its legal implications were discussed.

39. The Working Group discussed the evolution of international law since the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, including in the areas of international humanitarian law, human rights law and environmental law, and the potential implications for taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The Group also discussed the evolution of international criminal law as it related to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and the idea of undertaking a study of the evolution of international law relevant to the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons, including in the areas of international humanitarian law, human rights law, environmental law and in the legal realm of the International Criminal Court.

E. The role of States and other actors in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

40. The Working Group addressed the role of States and other actors in taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. It addressed in particular whether States had the same or different roles to play.

41. The Working Group noted that achieving a world without nuclear weapons was a shared responsibility of all States, notably in the light of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. It also noted that while that responsibility was shared and collective, States had differentiated roles and functions.

42. The Working Group shared the view that non-nuclear-weapon States had a role in promoting global nuclear disarmament. It considered that nuclear-weapon States, in particular those with the largest nuclear arsenals, bore a special responsibility in the tasks of achieving nuclear disarmament, including implementing effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament.

43. The Working Group discussed the role of parliamentarians, pertinent international organizations, in particular the United Nations and associated bodies, civil society and academia in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. In addressing nuclear weapons as a humanitarian and human security issue, the Group considered that States should build partnerships with a wide range of actors.

44. In discussing proposals, the Working Group explored the role of non-nuclear-weapon States in challenging the status and the value attached to nuclear weapons. The role of non-nuclear-weapons States under extended nuclear deterrence guarantees in reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines was also discussed. The Group also discussed the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in challenging the value and legitimacy of nuclear weapons and the potential for greater cooperation among the nuclear-weapon-free zones for promoting nuclear disarmament.

F. Other practical actions that could contribute to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

45. The Working Group discussed the need to continue to address nuclear disarmament in various forums, including the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament, the process for reviewing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and in high-level meetings and summits.

46. The Working Group discussed the role of education for promoting progress towards nuclear disarmament. Participants highlighted the contribution that education could make in increasing understanding about different dimensions of nuclear disarmament, including the humanitarian, economic and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons.

47. The Working Group considered the need to continue to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124), including with regard to reporting on a biennial basis on relevant efforts. Participants discussed making greater use of new communications and information technology to disseminate educational materials and raise awareness among the general public, in particularly among young people.

48. Participants discussed the reallocation of funding from nuclear-weapon programmes to other areas, inter alia, economic development, nuclear disarmament and disarmament and non-proliferation education. In addressing the issue of divestment of nuclear weapons, the Working Group discussed the role of the public and private sectors.

49. The Working Group discussed the impact of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the prevention of an arms race in outer space on nuclear disarmament.

50. The Working Group discussed the need for further work to be done on all the issues related to taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons addressed during the meetings of the Working Group.

V. Adoption of the report

51. At its meetings on 22 and 28 to 30 August, the Working Group considered agenda item 6, entitled "Report to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session".

52. At its final meeting, on 30 August, the Working Group adopted its report as contained in A/AC.281/L.1/Rev.1 and A/AC.281/L.2, as orally amended.